

MISSING PIN VARIETIES

by Michael Rucklidge

It is not uncommon for a perfin to have one or more missing holes. Usually this is due to a pin being bent so that when perforating it is forced against the bed-plate instead of into the hole. This will cause the pin to break if sufficient pressure is applied. There are a few cases where pins are removed intentionally because of a change in the designation of the user (see my note in the August 1984 Bulletin and Ted Smiths in this issue).

When a hole is obviously missing, it is regarded as being present and the perfin is so recorded. There is no problem here, except when so many holes are missing that the perfin is unreadable.

Problems do arise when the missing holes are those which lead to a readable, but different, perfin. For example, if the hole forming the cross-stroke of the A in the perfin AC is missing it can be read as VC when inverted and reversed. When the perfin is on piece or cover with the user's identity, this is usually obvious, but such is by no means always the case.

Perhaps an even trickier situation is when the missing holes do not change the lettering but only the recorded details. Missing full-stops are obvious examples, but others do occur. It is a matter of opinion whether these "varieties" should be included in the catalogue as different dies. My personal view is that they should not be included unless, of course, they can be shown to be used by different concerns (and hence to have come from a different perforator).

As an example, we have the following perfins, all believed to have been used by the School Board of London:-



The first is the "parent" die and is recorded in Tilles catalogue as S.811A. The second has lost the full-stop and is not recorded. The third has lost both the full-stop and a hole from the foot of the L, and is recorded as S.80.2A. By super-position all three dies are identical in both letter shape and spacing. Therefore, in my view, only the first should be recorded and the other two should be regarded as variants. The views of other members are invited.

It is a matter of conjecture how many other such examples exist in the catalogue. If it is decided only to record the "parent" die, the existence of variants could be denoted by the letter "v" after, say, the serial number.

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